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**CITY OF BELEN
PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEETING
MINUTES
JULY 8, 2019**

Chairman Steve Ethridge called the regular meeting of the Belen Planning and Zoning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PRESENT: Chairman Steve Ethridge
Commissioner Jim Lardner
Vice Chair Pete Armstrong
Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon

ABSENT: Commissioner Claudine Montano

CITY STAFF: Steven Tomita, Planning & Economic Development Director

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong moved to approve the Agenda of July 8, 2019.

Commissioner Jim Lardner seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong moved to approve the Minutes of April 29, 2019.

Commissioner Jim Lardner seconded the motion.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT – 3 MINUTE PRESENTATIONS

None

DISCUSSION

Affordable Housing Plan sections 1, 2 and 4.

Steven Tomita informed the Commission that they had decided to look at the above mentioned Affordable Housing Plan to discuss the information within those sections that can be added to the Master Plan. It will pull specific information and placed in the Master Plan along with referencing the Affordable Housing Plan.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong was amazed with the fact that the data in the Affordable Housing Plan was dated 2010. That is ten years ago and things have changed. There is no data from 2010 forward and he thinks some of the information is worth putting into the Master Plan but more of it is so outdated.

Steven Tomita said that when this document was done that was the most recent data that they had available. The needs of the Community is still there. There is a big need for affordable housing. The action that was taken was to support the Affordable Housing Ordinance. This Ordinance does say that we will support Affordable Housing but the investor is going to have to come to the City for approval of this. We will work with the investor for City help but are very limited as to what we can do. There are programs out there that an investor can get State and Federal funding for, and depending on the type of funding, we can act as Administer. In states like Arizona, when a developer comes in they have set aside a certain amount of the project for affordable housing. He does not know how well it would do if forced. There is a need for this in Belen.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that the Commission was asked to review the Affordable Housing Plan to see what would be feasible for the City Master Plan. If that is the case why not just put a paragraph that references these other documents into the Master Plan and not all the data which will increase the size of the Master Plan. We could just write a paragraph to that affect.

Steven Tomita said that it can be done that way but asked if they thought that there was anything in the other document that should actually be put into the Master Plan. It is up the them as to how this is done. The Master Plan is so long and information in it is sliced and diced from other documents.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that page six of the Affordable Housing Plan pretty much sums it all up.

Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon said that page 23 is an area that needs to be referenced or included in the Master Plan.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that the first page of the Affordable Housing Plan sums everything up very nicely. The summary page shows Belen as a sleepy little jewel in the desert. There are a lot of growth that is anticipated in Belen. There is a lot of opportunity for development in Belen.

Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon said that he thought that the MRCOG population projections needs to be included in the Master Plan as a point of sale for the City.

Steven Tomita asked if they had updated the population projections. He then said that he did not think that they had covered that yet. He remembers that was the part that they were going to work on. The main thing is where is Belen going to be in twenty years.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that the City should go off the MRCOG projections.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that a lot of those numbers are going off of projection speculations. Rancho Cielo was going to become a second Belen but that all went away.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said the projections go out to the year 2035.

Steven Tomita told the Commission that they should look at that real quick. He said that they were looking at a bigger number. He said they were looking at about 13,000 people in population growth. They were also looking at the GRT that hit last year which was 6 million dollars last year which was an increase of 1.5 million. In 20 years it would be 30 million. It would take more than 20 thousand people to reach that.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that he was looking at the numbers that MRGOG came up with and he would think that they are experienced enough to project those numbers.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he does not think that he can look that far into the future. Our job is to identify people that do that on a daily basis. We do not have those kind of skill sets to make those predictions.

Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon said that he still thinks that the Commission should be somewhat around what MRCOG has. MRCOG is very capable of doing this kind of things. There is a potential for Rancho Cielo to come to fruition in the foreseeable future.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that even the other tables have seen a change that has actually happened. Just one small subdivision can jump our numbers by 10%. Belen is the next area that will be developed. He feels that Belen is going to grow faster than some believe.

Steven Tomita said if it is any help to them, he lives in Albuquerque and the traffic is pretty heavy and it takes longer to get from one place in Albuquerque to another. What MRCOG did was get information from local areas. He said that they were already throwing out projections before we looked at Affordable Housing. Westway homes is building out and that is around 240 or more people. Jarden de Belen has a projected three hundred lots that they are going to build out. That is almost another 900 more people. There are more looking at building in Belen. The interest is there, the drive is there, and we can look forward to more growth. The cost of living in Los Lunas is getting high and some developers are now looking at Belen. He feels that in 20 years we will easily reach the projected numbers that are currently in the Comprehensive Plan.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that he was going off the numbers that were in the Comprehensive Plan. Those numbers they based on the development of Rancho Cielo. He is the biggest advocate for growth in Belen.

Steven Tomita said that we (the Planning Commission) need to decide what we think the City will be in 20 years. The public is also going to give us another number. They can come up with a bigger number. If we do not come up with something then nothing is going to happen.

Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon said it shows our optimism in the City of Belen.

Steven Tomita said if you don't have jobs and population, you don't have growth.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that if you don't have rooftops then we will be overlooked for businesses and growth. If you look at rooftops that will give you a positive outcome in growth. With growth comes other growth.

Steven Tomita said that when he and the Mayor met with Mike Mechenbier, Mike's comment was, if you do not develop subdivisions you will not grow. Retailers, other businesses then come in if the housing is available. They go hand in hand.

Commissioner Jim Lardner asked if Belen has developable land that is within the already utilities available in the streets.

Steven Tomita said that there are 100 acres that are available in the Rio Grande Industrial Park. The Airport has a big potential for Belen. There needs to be an Airport Master Plan for that area or it will not grow as it should.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said it is like a sales brochure.

Steven Tomita said that it is not just a sales brochure, it is an incentive for development. It shows what the City of Belen expects when developing in Belen. It shows that we do have a future and what we expect for the future development. It also shows that we welcome new development. That is what is really is.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that he is not a developer, but if someone is interested in the area you would expect them to come into City Hall for information.

Steven Tomita said it gives the developers an idea of what is expected. If you don't show this them most of your developers will not even stop to look. There are many who do not want Belen to grow and we need to show what is expected so that there will be some interest in the area for growth. That is what a Master Plan will show. Belen has a reputation for no growth and we need to change that attitude and show what we expect as far as development goes.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that some of the new businesses that have come in have been very welcomed by the people of Belen and they are doing great.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that we need to show a more positive growth expectations in some of these Master Plans.

Steven Tomita said yes and these plans need to be in place when these developer come into Belen and look at this area.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said they will also look at the homes to see how well they are built, the neighborhood they are located in, etc. You will get a slew of people moving in from Albuquerque because of the traffic situation. Albuquerque and Los Lunas has no significant areas to develop anymore and neither does Los Lunas. They will come here to Belen.

Steven Tomita asked the Commission if they want to hold to the 173% that is currently in the Comprehensive Plan. It was based on Rancho Cielo but it fell through. The City is working on getting funds to get the interchange done.

The Commission asked about the railroad interchange that was looking at an area in Rancho Cielo.

Steven Tomita explained the situation with that development. There are now big manufacturing companies looking at that area and they use trucking instead of rail service. He asked if the MRCOG predictions could be reached.

The Commission said yes.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that there is a chart in the Comprehensive Plan that shows the possible growth for the metropolitan area and felt that some of those projections were a little high for some of those areas because they have no more area to grow.

Steven Tomita said that there are some areas that can grow but some of that area is really ruff to grow in. Some developers are looking at areas that can grow up and not out. Theoretically the denser you get the cheaper it is. The developer does not have all the infrastructure costs when developing, but the traffic congestion will be a growing problem so there are some developers looking at areas that are around the area and Belen is one of those areas. He said that he would eliminate the 42% growth on the North West.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said he would still like to leave the chart on page 10 in the document.

Steven Tomita said that Rancho Cielo is not dead. There are 6,000 acres there. Belen is set up to grow everywhere.

The Commission decided to leave the 173% in the projected growth and we have set what we would see the City of Belen in 20 years. They wanted to use the charts they have discussed also.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that he feels that the growth nodes need to be mentioned in the Master Plan.

Steven Tomita said the young families look for more rental units that permanent units. The mentality of the younger people are more than likely young professionals that have a tendency to more around more.

Commissioner Jim Lardner said that a lot of people commute to Albuquerque for work. He asked why Belen could not become another Rio Rancho.

Steven Tomita said it could become another Rio Rancho.

Commissioner Gabriel Gabaldon said that a lot of people that live in Rio Rancho work in Santa Fe.

Steven Tomita said they just need to realize that people are changing. There will be a strange mixture of people coming into Belen.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that he thinks that there will be more people that are going to buy homes for an investment that they will eventually use. They will rent it out then occupy the home when they become more stable and are not moving around so much.

Steven Tomita said the right now it is someone who is looking to rent and not buy. The numbers in the existing charts are pretty good. He asked the Commission to look back on the chart on page one of the Comprehensive Plan. This chart gives an overall picture of Belen. He feels that it is still accurate.

The Commission decided to leave that in. He said they have reviewed section one of the Affordable Housing Plan and they decided to leave the discussion there.

Steven Tomita said that some changes will be done to the charts.

Commissioner Jim Lardner asked if a housing inventory has been done.

Steven Tomita said no. We need to build that inventory. Housing is moving real fast at this time.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that there is one area that is still around and that is the vacant home.

Steven Tomita said that is because those properties are not for sale. He asked if the commuting graph needs to change. He feels that it is important to put in the Master Plan.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that there is a lot of people in Belen that commute to work. There are more than people commuting that most people are unaware of.

Steven Tomita said that these figures need to be looked at and changed if need be.

Chairman Steve Ethridge said that page 23 and 60 should be in the document.

Steven Tomita said any of the data from those pages needs to be changed before it is added. Senior housing needs to be included.

Single wide Manufactured homes and double wide Manufactured homes were discussed. Tiny homes was brought up.

Steven Tomita said that there are no standards for those type of homes so they need to come before the Commission for approval and that would involve a zone change which means they would also have to go before Council for final approval.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong said that he would like to see the document with all the changes done before the Commission moves to the next area of review.

The Commission talked about the housing in the Belen area and asked if that could be updated and added.

Steven Tomita said that he would contact Darleen of Sachs Real Estate to see if she could give him an idea of the numbers on that. He suggested that they go through some of the Downtown Master Plan before they review the changes that they have done.

The Commission suspended further discussion until a future date. The next time they will go over some of the Downtown Master Plan.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Communication from the Commission and Staff.

None.

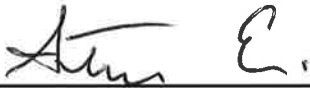
ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission, Commissioner Jim Lardner moved to adjourn.

Vice Chair Pete Armstrong seconded the motion

Motion carried.

The regular meeting of the City of Belen Planning & Zoning Commission adjourned at 7:50 PM.


Chairman Steve Ethridge

ATTEST:


Steven Tomita, Planning & Economic Development Director